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WHITTIER'S BIRTHDAY.

The sweet poet of peace, the gentle, genuine friend of humanity, the kindly, loved Whittier has lived to another birthday, and that one his eighty-third. In the old days of Rome when the family was esteemed a thing holy, and the noble doers among men were reverenced, he who attained the grand climacteric of 63 was accounted a citizen worthy of special honors, and a subject of general gratulation. To what high tribute and affectionate remembrance, by this ancient custom of distinction, is not the Quaker poet entitled, who has exceeded by a score of years the Roman standard, and been all the years of his life an example of virtue before the people? Held aloof from the world by a modesty as delicate as his religious faith is simple, Mr. Whittier has been ever one of the most unsophisticated of celebrated men; and in the quiet, uncorroding atmosphere of New England village life, has preserved the fragrance of a singularly benevolent and philanthropic disposition. Fame came to him with the outstretched arms of pure love, found him unexpectant but grateful, and left him as serene, as unaffected, as beautiful of nature as she found him.

Happily, age has not yet fallen so heavily upon him that he is denied the practice of habits that have contributed to his pleasures for many years. He goes his accustomed rounds cheerfully, only a little more hesitancy and feebleness of step telling of his burden of years, while his mind seems to have lost none of its brightness, nor even its creative facility, for he is even now writing at leisure a poem to celebrate America's fourth centenary. ~~Much reason then have the good people of Amesbury to make merry to-day, while at post-office and telegraph station there will be activity enough among clerks and messengers bearing greetings from the world beyond Amesbury that rejoices in the long and lengthening life of the poet some have declared to be America's chiefest.~~

—Inter-Ocean.

BURNING DRIFT-WOOD.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Before my drift-wood fire I sit,
And see, with every waif I burn,
Old dreams and fancies coloring it,
And folly's unlaid ghosts return.

O ships of mine, whose swift keels cleft
The enchanted sea on which they sailed,
Are these poor fragments only left
Of vain desires and hopes that failed?

Did I not watch from them the light
Of sunset on my towers in Spain,
And see, far off, uploom in sight,
The Happy Isles I might not gain?

Did sudden lift of fog reveal
Arcadia's vales of song and spring,
And did I pass, with grazing keel,
The rocks whereon the sirens sing?

Did land winds blow from jasmin flowers,
Where Youth the ageless Fountain fills?
Did Love make sign from rose blown bowers,
And Gold from Eldorado's hills?

Alas! the gallant ships that sailed
On blind Adventure's errand sent,
Howe'er they laid their courses, failed
To reach the haven of Content.

And of my ventures, those alone
Which Love had freighted, safely sped,
Seeking a good beyond my own,
By clear-eyed Duty piloted.

O mariners, hoping still to meet
The luck Arabian voyagers met,
And find in Bagdad's moonlit street
Haroun al Raschid walking yet!

Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth,
I turn from all that only seems,
And seek the sober grounds of truth.

What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortening day,
And colder blows the wintry air!

The wrecks of passion and desire,
The castles I no more rebuild,
May fitly feed my drift-wood fire,
And warm the hands that age has chilled.

Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains;
A song of praise is on my lips
For losses which are now my gains.

Heap high my hearth! No worth is lost;
No wisdom with the folly dies.
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust
Shall be my evening sacrifice!

Far more than all I dared to dream,
Unsought before my door I see;
On wings of fire and steeds of steam
The world's great wonders come to me.

And holier signs, unmarked before,
Of Love to seek and power to save,—
The righting of the wronged and poor,
The man evolving from the slave.

And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait,
In calm assurance of the good.

And well the waiting time must be,
Tho' brief or long its granted days,
If Faith and Hope and Charity
Sit by my evening hearth-fire's blaze.

And with them, friends whom Heaven has spared,
Whose love my heart has comforted,
And, sharing all my joys, has shared
My tender memories of the dead.

Dear souls who left us lonely here,
Bound on their last, long voyage, to whom
We, day by day, are drawing near,
Where every bark has sailing room.

I know the solemn monotone
Of waters calling unto me;
I know from whence the airs have blown
That whisper of the Eternal Sea.

As low my fires of drift-wood burn,
I hear that sea's deep sounds increase,
And, fair in sunset light, discern
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

Danvers, Mass.

—Independent.